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UPDATE ON THE NEWS

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Libel Suit Settled

■ A former CIA agent who filed suit in federal court here against the writers and publisher of a 1980 book that accused him of playing a role in the assassination of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier has settled the case in exchange for a public retraction and an undisclosed amount of cash.

David Atlee Phillips had said he was libeled by assertions in the book "Death in Washington," written by Donald Freed and Fred Simon Landis and published by Lawrence C. Hill.

A statement filed in U.S. District Court said the defendants in the suit "now retract any charges or allegations" made against Phillips and that "the publisher expresses its regrets that the book as published contained the statements now retracted by the authors."

Phillips, founder of a group aimed at fighting public misstatements about the activities of former intelligence officers, said he hopes that the settlement will send a message "to irresponsible critics who think they can write total, outrageous nonsense."

— Ed Bruske